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ABSTRACT

This report outlines the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' plan to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth, as required by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The major purpose of the plan is to guide local education agencies and supply them with resources as they attempt to meet the educational needs of homeless children, to clarify the Massachusetts Department of Education's policies regarding the education of homeless students, and to describe future goals and strategies. The plan's major sections address the following issues: (1) students' district of attendance and general educational services; (2) transportation to and from school; (3) transfer of school records; (4) tutorial services; (5) services for homeless children who find permanent housing during the school year; (6) inservice training for school personnel; (7) interagency cooperation; (8) resolution of disputes and assurance of compliance; (9) dissemination of information; (10) annual data collection; and (11) a Homeless Advisory Committee. Each of the sections consists of the following components: (1) title and brief description of the issue; (2) McKinney Act regulations pertaining to the issue; (3) existing Massachusetts statutes and regulations pertaining to the issue; (4) Massachusetts Department of Education's policy pertaining to the issue; (5) goals and objectives to address the issue; and (6) proposed activities/timetables. Appendices provide the following: (1) a list of Homeless Advisory Committee members; (2) memos from Commissioner of Education, October 1988, January 1989; (3) list of Regional Education Center homeless liaisons and breakdown of regions; and (4) 18-month timeline of proposed activities. (BJV)

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Educational Services For Homeless Children and Youth

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STATE PLAN TO ADDRESS THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

March 1989

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. History

In July 1987 President Reagan signed into effect PL 100-77, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The purpose of this omnibus legislation is to aid homeless individuals and families by providing states with federal funds to establish programs for the homeless. Title VII, Subtitle B of this public law addresses the education of homeless children. Four requirements of Subtitle B are:

- "to establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth . . ";
- to "gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the State, and such data gathering shall include the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and homeless youth in elementary and secondary schools, and the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children;"
- to "prepare and submit to the Secretary an interim report not later than December 31, 1987 and a final report not later than December 31 of each year, on the data gathered. . .";
- "Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State . . ."

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts received the first round of McKinney funds ($89,000) in February 1988. In August 1988 a Coordinator of the Massachussetts Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth was hired (Michelle Fryt). In October 1988 she collected the needed state-wide data on the education of homeless children by sending a survey form to all school superintendents, shelter directors and personnel working with homeless families living in hotels and motels. A report on the collected data was sent to the United States Department of Education in December 1988. A comprehensive report of this data on the status of homeless students in Massachusetts was disseminated in January 1989. The Massachusetts Department of Education will apply for the Fiscal Year 1988 McKinney funds ($96,000) in April 1989.

An Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth was formed in November 1988. (See Appendix A for a list of the committee members.) This committee met during November, December 1988 and January 1989 to draw up this first draft of the Massachusetts Plan to address the educational needs of homeless children.

Before the formation of the advisory committee the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) addressed specific educational needs of homeless students by taking the following actions:

- A memo was issued from Commissioner Raynolds in October 1988 which clarified the Massachusetts Department of Education's policy on certain issues relating to the education of homeless children. A section of this policy stated that homeless parents have the right to choose which school their children will attend: the school in their district of origin or the school they would be entitled to attend in their district of temporary residence. (See Appendix B for a copy of this memo.)

- The Massachusetts Board of Education filed a proposal with the State legislature in November 1988 which would provide 100% reimbursement to communities which provide transportation to/from school for homeless children who are living in one school district and attending school in another. A sum of $100,000 was attached to this bill. (See p. 9 for a copy of this proposed legislation.)

Both of these actions were incorporated into the first draft of the plan.

Public hearings on the plan were held on February 28, 1989 in Quincy and on March 1, 1989 in Chicopee. Written comments were received from February 10, 1989 - March 10, 1989. Based on both the written and verbal comments received, revisions were made to the first draft of the plan. This March 1989 copy of the plan reflects any such revisions.

B. Purpose

A major purpose of the following plan is to guide local education agencies and supply them with resources as they

attempt to meet the educational needs of homeless children. It clarifies Massachusetts Department of Education's policies relating to the education of homeless students and describes future goals and strategies. Sections of the plan will be reviewed and revised as needed. The plan was created as a document which can be amended, when applicable, to best serve homeless children.

C. Format

Each of the major sections of the plan (A - K) addresses an issue relevant to the education of homeless children and youth in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Each sections consists of the following components:

- Title and Brief Description of the Issue
- McKinney Regulations Pertaining to the Issue (if any)
- Existing Massachusetts Statutes and Regulations Pertaining to the Issue (if any)
- Massachusetts Department of Education's Policy Pertaining to the Issue (if any)
- Goals and Objectives to Address the Issue (if no policy exists or the existing policy does not adequately address the issue)
- Proposed Activities/Timelines

D. Definitions

As used in this plan, the following words shall have the meanings stated below:

Homeless: A homeless individual is one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accomodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated

for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. [McKinney Homeless Assistance Act Section 103 (a)(1)(2)]

In Massachusetts this includes those children/youth living in family, adolescent, and battered women shelters, in state parks, in cars, and on the street. It also includes the "doubled-up" population defined as:

-any child or youth temporarily living in an overcrowded situation (with or without their parents) with friends or relatives because they have been displaced from their previous residence due to one or more of the reasons listed below:

1) the child/youth and/or his/her family were paying over 50% of their income for rent and were evicted when they failed to make rent payments;

2) the child/youth and/or members of his/her family left the previous residence because of an abusive situation;

3) the child/youth and/or his/her family were displaced by a public improvement, or condemnation resulting from enforcement of the state sanitary code;

4) the child/youth and/or his/her family were displaced due to condominium conversion or removal of the unit from the rental market;

5) the child/youth and/or his/her family were displaced due to substandard housing conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of the household;

6) the child/youth and/or his/her family were displaced due to a fire or other catastrophic event;

7) the child/youth and/or his/her family were displaced because of over-crowded conditions in the previous residence.

Child/Youth: those persons who, were they children of residents of the State, would be entitled to a free public education. [McKinney Nonregulatory Guidance]

In Massachusetts this phrase includes persons aged three through twenty-one who would otherwise be entitled to a free public education.

School District: the entire geographic area under the control of a particular school committee.

School Attendance Zone: an intra-district area defined by local school authorities, the residents of which are entitled to attend the public school serving that area. (Corresponds with the term "geocode".)

School District or Attendance Zone of Origin: the school district or attendance zone within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in which a homeless child was last enrolled prior to becoming homeless.

School District or Attendance Zone of Temporary Residence: the school district or attendance zone, within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in which the shelter, hotel/motel or other temporary housing facility is located.

II. Body of Plan

A. Schools Homeless Children May Attend And Educational Services To Which They Are Entitled

1.0 School personnel and shelter providers recognize the need for homeless children to establish continuity in an educational program. Remaining in the same school throughout the school year can provide a stabilizing factor during a time of upheaval and transition for children who do not have a permanent residence. The following section addresses the educational services homeless children are entitled to receive and the need for these children to remain in one school as their place of residence is temporarily changed.

1.1 **McKinney Regulations**

"Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State which will contain provisions designed to-

> (A) authorize the State educational agency, the local educational agency, the parent or guardian of the homeless child, the homeless youth, or the applicable social worker to make the determinations required under this section;"
> [PL 100-77, Subtitle B, Sec. 722 (e) (1)]

"The local educational agency of each homeless child or youth shall either-

> (A) continue the child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the school year, or
> (B) enroll the child or youth in the school district where the child or youth is actually living:

whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.
The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents."
[PL 100-77, Subititle B, Sec 722, (e)(3)(4)]

"Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph (3), including educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, and educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency, programs in vocational education, programs for the gifted and talented, and school meals programs."
[PL 100-77, Subtitle B, Sec 722, (e)(5)]

1.2 Existing Massachusetts Statute

"Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides. "
(Mass. G.L. c. 76, S5)

1.3 Policy of the Massachusetts Department of Education

Parents or guardians of homeless children have the right to choose whether to continue to have their children attend school in the district of origin or to enroll them in school in the district of temporary residence. The Department of Education strongly urges school districts to extend this right to parents of homeless children who are moved from place to place within a district since this is consistent with the intention of the McKinney Act. These children have the right to receive any educational programs (i.e., Chapter 1, bilingual, gifted and talented, special education, vocational education, school meals, etc.) for which they meet the eligiblity criteria and will also abide by the code of conduct pertaining to all students adopted by the school committee of the district in which they are attending school.

(a) Parents or guardians of homeless children and adolescents who are in temporary or voluntary custody of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS), or any other designated state agency, still maintain the right to choose which school their child will attend. In cases where DSS or another designated agency has permanent custody of the homeless child or adolescent, the appropriate social worker is entitled to choose which school the child/youth will attend unless a legal guardian or an Educational Advocate for special educational needs has been designated. The legal guardian or the Educational Advocate would then be entitled to select which school the child/youth will attend.

(b) Any homeless youth who is eighteen or over has the right to decide which school he/she will attend.

(c) Any homeless adolescent who is under eighteen and is living separate and apart from his/her parents, does not have a legal guardian, is not a ward of the state, and who is managing his/her own financial affairs is also entitled to decide which school he/she will attend. However, in each such situation, the filing of an appropriate CHINS or Care and Protection petition should be considered. If the adolescent has or is suspected of having special educational needs and his/her parents are deceased, out-of-state, unknown, cannot be located, or are unavailable to participate in the special education process, the receiving school will refer the adolescent to the Department of Education for the appointment of an Educational Advocate to represent the adolescent in the special education process.

(d) All decisions regarding educational placement of a homeless child/youth should be made based on the best interest of the child. The following parameters should be considered as the educational placement decision is made:

- length of commute to/from school and cost of such transportation
- age of child
- special educational needs of child
- continuity in one educational program
- geographical area in which housing search is being done
- number and ages of siblings
- month of the school year
- schools other children (if any) in the shelter/motel are attending school

B. Transportation for Homeless Children

2.0 Since homeless parents have been given the right to choose which school their children will attend it is important to support them in their decision by providing transportation for their children to and from the school they have choosen. It is recognized that budgetary constraints limit the available fiscal resources for such transporation. The following policy addresses the issue in a comprehensive manner yet takes into account the present systemic constraints.

2.1 Existing Massachusetts Statutes

Massachusetts school committees must provide transportation to students who reside in excess of two miles from the school they are entitled to attend. (See Mass. General Laws C.71, sec. 68.)
Towns will receive state reimbursement for transportation provided to students who reside at least one and one-half miles from the school they are entitled to attend. (See Mass. General Laws, C.71, sec. 7A.)

2.2 Policy of the Massachusetts Department of Education

Homeless children who are attending the school assigned to them by the local school district are entitled to the same school transportation that is offered to other children in that district. If they are attending school in their attendance zone of origin and this is different than their attendance zone of temporary residence, the local school district is urged to transport them to/from their school of attendance; these transportation costs are reimbursable under the regular schedule of reimbursement from the state of Massachusetts. Such transportation services will enable homeless children to maintain continuity in their educational placement.

(a) The parents of homeless children who are placed in a shelter or other temporary housing in one school district and choose to have their children continue attending school in their district of origin are responsible for transporting their children to/from that school. They may seek assistance for such transportation from either district. School districts may offer to provide this service but, presently, there are no funds available to reimburse school districts for this type of transportation. If the school districts are not able to transport the children to/from school the parents are responsible for this transportation.

In recognition of this problem proposed legislation has been filed by the Massachusetts Board of Education with the Massachusetts Legislature which would reimburse school districts for transporting homeless children to/from school across district lines. This proposal would amend Massachusetts General Laws, Ch 76, Section 7 by inserting the following section after Section 7:

"7A. The Commonwealth shall, subject to appropriation, pay to a city, town or regional school district one hundred percent of the cost of transportation of students temporarily placed in shelters for the homeless not more than twice daily between any school within the town, or in another town and such temporary shelter; provided however that no reimbursement for transporting a pupil between school and a temporary shelter for the homeless shall be made if the distance between the school and said shelter is less than one and one-half miles, measured by a commonly traveled route. Notwithstanding the provisions of any special or general law reimbursement under this section is limited to the costs incurred for the transportation of pupils temporarily placed in shelters for the homeless located in a city or town other than the city of town such students resided in prior to their placement in a shelter. For the purpose of this section shelter for the homeless includes transitional housing, battered women's shelters, family shelters, adolescent shelters, hotels and motels."

(b) In lieu of the 1989 proposed legislation stated in Section 2.3 (a), the following options should be considered to provide transportation for homeless children to/from school:

- accessing Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare (DPW) Emergency Assistance funds which provide eligible families with $10.00 per day for transportation costs; (This maximum also applies to all the family's housing-search related transportation expenses and for transportation to medical appointments if not covered by another source and can only be used for inter-district transportation.)
- involving other community agencies (services for the elderly, community action agencies, public transportation systems) in establishing a network to transport homeless children to/from school.

2.3 Goal, Objectives and Strategies

Goal:

to ensure that all homeless children in Massachusetts who live in excess of two miles from their school of attendance will receive transportation to/from that school.

Objective # 1:

A system will be established to provide transportation to/from school for homeless children who are attending school in their attendance zone of origin and this happens to be different than their attendance zone of temporary residence.

Proposed Activities/Timeline

March 1989 — •Disseminate to all school superintendents, shelter providers and other involved agencies Massachusetts Department of Education's transportation policy which delineates under what circumstances school districts can be reimbursed, under the regular schedule of reimbursement, for transporting homeless children to/from school; encourage school districts to provide such transportation.

Ongoing — •Set up meetings between school administrators, personnel from Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), local Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Public Welfare (DPW) personnel, shelter providers, community action agencies to discuss the transportation issue on local levels; formulate local networks to assist homeless children acquire transportation to/from school.

Objective #2:

A system will be established to provide transportation to/from school for homeless children who are attending school in their district of origin and this happens to be different than their district of temporary residence.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

As Needed — •Continue to provide information to interested parties on the Massachusetts Board of Education's proposed state legislation which would reimburse communities for transporting to/from school homeless children who are living in one school district and attending school in another.

Ongoing	•Work with the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare to explore how Emergency Assistance Transportation Funds can be utilized to transport to/from school homeless children who are crossing district lines. (Such a system has already been set up with the Holyoke school district; individual shelters are also utilizing these funds.)
Ongoing	•Establish networks on local levels (as mentioned in the strategies above) of all involved parties to formulate solutions to the transportation problem at the local level. Incorporate this with the proposed inservice trainings. (See Section 6.1.)

C. Transfer of School Records

3.0 As homeless children move from one place of residence to another it is important that they start attending a new school without delay. The transfer of school records may cause delays that are unneccesary and easily remedied. The following policy describes how the present system of record transfer can be expedited to ensure homeless children a smooth and quick entry into any new school.

3.1 McKinney Regulations

"The school records of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained-

(A) so that the records are available in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

(B) in a manner that is consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act."

[PL 100-77, Subtitle B Sec 722 (e)(6)]

3.2 Existing Massachusetts Statutes and Regulations

"Every person shall have the right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides." (Mass G.L. c. 76, S5)

Massachusetts Department of Education's Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.01-23.12

3.3 Policy of the Massachusetts Department of Education

In accordance with existing Massachusetts policy, all homeless children/youth are entitled to start school immediately upon registration, except for those children who have not been properly immunized. The regular Massachusetts policy on record transfer will be adhered to with additional considerations for homeless children. The provisions delineated in section 3.3 (a) of this Plan should be made only after the following two conditions have been met. The provisions delineated in sections 3.3 (c) and (d) should only be made after the following two conditions have been met and the sending school has the signed release-of-information form in hand.

1) the parents or guardians of a homeless child, or a homeless youth who is fourteen years or over, or a homeless adolescent who is living separate and apart from his/her parents and is managing his/her own finances, give written consent to school personnel to make the telephone calls described below, and

2) the parents or guardians of a homeless child, or a homeless youth who is fourteen years or over, or a homeless adolescent who is living separate and apart from his/her parents and is managing his/her own financial affairs, sign a release-of-information form which is in the process of being mailed back to the sending school so that the child's/youth's original school records will be sent to the receiving school.

(a) If a homeless child wishes to register in a school and does not have a transfer card or any other written record of immunization but has been immunized and the records are on-hand at a previous school of attendance, the school nurse of the receiving school may call the school nurse of the sending school and take the immunization information over the telephone. When the school nurse has verified that the student has been age-appropriately immunized and a new school health record card (form PH-M-1) completed, then the student may start school in the new setting. This will ensure availability of records if the student needs to transfer again soon. Every effort should be made to complete the transfer card (form ED-ADM-13) in order to keep phone calls to an absolute minimum.

(b) Whenever documentation of the student's immunization history is missing, the student is considered to be unimmunized and the student may not enter school until the first in-the-series immunizations have been administered. School personnel should then direct the child's parents to the local Department of Public Health office or a local clinic where the vaccines are administered. If the school nurse is eligible to administer the vaccines he/she should provide these services to the family.

(c) The school receiving a homeless child can verify the child's general academic record (i.e., grade level, C.B.E.T. scores) by calling the sending school and asking for the information over the telephone.

(d) If a homeless child was previously enrolled in a special education program but has no records of this on hand, the Special Education Director or designee of the receiving school may contact the Special Education Director or designee of the sending school to obtain the basic information (i.e., date and status of most recent Individualized Education Plan, prototype, particular needs or disabilities). This information can be transferred over the telephone between the designated personnel.

D. Tutorial Services

4.0 In Massachusetts it has been recognized that homeless children would benefit by having access to tutorial services both in addition to, and in lieu of, regular educational services. Often children who are homeless and/or in crisis are not able to function in a regular classroom. In these cases tutorial services would help homeless children/adolescents maintain their academic level of performance and ease their transition back into a school setting. Tutorial services used as supplements to regular education programs would provide homeless children with one-on-one instruction and extra help in basic subjects. The following section specifies some ways that local educational agencies and shelters can collaborate to meet the educational needs of homeless children and adolescents.

4.1 Existing Massachusetts Regulations

"Each school committee shall provide a Type A home or hospital program to each child who, in the judgement of the child's physician, will have to remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for a period of not less than fourteen or more than sixty days during any school year, in order not to endanger the health or safety of such child or that of others." [Refers to special education services only. Chapter 766 Regs, 502.7(a)]

4.2 Goal, Objectives and Strategies

Goal:

Homeless children within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will have access to any existing tutorial services set up by local school systems or available through volunteer tutor networks to be used as supplements to or, when enrollment in any school system is not in the best interest of the child/youth, in lieu of, a regular educational program.

Objective #1:

If a homeless child/adolescent is not receiving any educational services and enrollment in any school is not in the best interest of the child/adolescent, he/she will have access to tutorial services which provide a temporary educational program. These will be provided only as a last resort, after placement within a school system has been thoroughly investigated and it is decided that such placement will be detrimental to the homeless youth or other students in the school system.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

Inter-agency Meeting: March 1989	•Any existing Massachusetts policies relating to the education of children/adolescents placed in shelters [e.g., regulations set by DSS, Office for Children (OFC), Massachusetts Departments of Mental and Public Health (DMH, DPH) and any other designated agencies] will be clarified. DOE will will take a lead role in collaborating with these agencies to define any such existing policies, supplement or amend these as needed and ensure that they are enforced. Such policies should clearly delineate the party responsible for the educational program of children/adolescents placed in shelters, the length of time the responsible party is required to provide these services and options such parties may consider as they attempt to provide these educational services.
March - April 1989	•Examine existing adolescent shelter educational programs including YOU, Inc. (Worcester), Key Program (Pittsfield) and Attleboro Youth Services.
May - Oct. 1989	•Work with the Coalition of Adolescent Emergency Services and local school districts to develop in-house tutorial programs that provide homeless children/adolescents with a basic educational program.
May - Oct. 1989	•A miniumum set of standards will be developed by the Department of Education or Local Educational Agencies (based on the model chosen) for in-shelter educational programs designed to temporarily replace a regular educational program for homeless children/adolescents residing in temporary housing facilities. These guidelines should be designed to maintain the academic performance of these youngsters and should allow for the certification of the in-house programs in order that the participating students will be able to receive credit for the time they are enrolled in such programs.

Objective #2:

If a homeless child is already enrolled in an educational program but is exhibiting academic delays or experiencing difficulty with his/her schoolwork he/she will have access to after-school or summer tutorial services provided through a volunteer tutor network.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

•A proposal will be submitted within the Department of Education to use available McKinney funds to hire a half-time consultant to establish and implement a volunteer tutor network. Duties of the consultant will include:

May - June 1989: perform needs assessment
June - July 1989: draft plan for a state-wide volunteer tutor network
August 1989 - May 1990: implement volunteer tutor network

E. Services For Homeless Children Who Find Permanent Housing During The School Year

5.0 Children who move from a shelter or motel or another type of temporary housing into a permanent residence undergo further upheaval and transition in their home life. The schools these children are attending could play an important role during this period by providing stability in at least one sector of their lives. The following section addresses the need to maintain continuity in the educational placement of homeless children throughout this transitional period.

5.1 Goal, Objectives and Strategies

Goal:

to ensure that homeless children will be able to maintain continuity in an educational program during their period of homelessness and until the transition into permanent housing is complete

Objective #1:

When a homeless child moves from a temporary housing facility into a permanent residence during the course of a school year the child's parent(s) and the school officials will make every effort to keep the child in the school he/she is presently attending for the remainder of the school year if this is in the best interest of the child as agreed by the parent(s) and the local school authorities.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

Ongoing

- Encourage school districts to support the parent's decision by allowing all educational services provided to that child to continue for the remainder of the school year; parents will provide the transportation to/from school in situations where it is not feasible for either school district to continue the transportation services.

F. Inservice Training For School Personnel

6.0 National trends indicate that homeless families are the largest growing sector of the homeless population. In Massachusetts statistics from the Department of Public Welfare show that, indeed, the number of homeless families is increasing. In light of this reality it is essential that school personnel have a heightened awareness of the unique emotional, physical and educational needs of homeless children. The following section addresses the need to sensitize school personnel to the variety of needs homeless children bring to the school setting.

6.1 Goal, Objectives and Strategies

Goal:

to sensitize all school personnel who are involved in some facet of the educational program of homeless children to the unique emotional, social, educational and physical needs of these children.

Objective #1:

The Massachusetts Department of Education, in conjunction with the DPW, DSS, homeless individuals, and local service agencies (community action agencies, shelter providers, housing corporations, advocacy groups) will hold inservice trainings, to be held on the regional level, to provide information/resources to school personnel (bus drivers, secretaries, teachers, counselors, administrators, bilingual personnel) who work with homeless children.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

Planning:
March - April 1989

- Work with the Homeless Advisory Committee to design a format for such inservice trainings. Include the following as possible topics:
  - -homeless situation on local level
  - -local resources school personnel can use to find out more about the homeless in their community
  - -unique educational needs of homeless children
  - -intervention strategies school personnel can use to meet the educational needs of this population

Hold Inservices:
May - Oct 1989

March - April 1989

- Explore the possibility of utilizing the Commonwealth Inservices Institute and Parents' and Children's Services in the preparation of such workshops.

Ongoing

- Use local resources (Children's Hospital, Harvard University) to acquire information on the emotional, physical, and medical needs of homeless children.

G. Interagency Collaboration

7.0 Results from a survey issued by DOE's Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in October 1988 indicate that school districts are not fully aware of the homeless children who are attending their schools. This has both positive and negative implications; positively, this indicates that families who are homeless are able to keep this information confidential, but, negatively, if local school districts are not aware that there are homeless children in their community they will not be able to ensure that these children are receiving all the educational services to which they are entitled.

Some collaboration between agencies already exists. The policies set forth in this State Plan were formed by an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from numerous agencies involved with homeless children. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Human Services has established a Governor's Task Force on Homelessness which includes representatives from various agencies involved in the homeless situation. Some communities within the Commonwealth have established task forces which address the homeless issue in a collaborative fashion. In recognition that such networking is essential to meeting the needs of homeless children the following section delineates ways in which such an interagency collaboration can be strengthened and used to address the specific educational needs of homeless children.

7.1 Goal, Objectives and Strategies

Goal:

to strengthen collaboration between involved agencies [including DOE, DPW, DSS, DPH, OFC, Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS), shelter providers, advocacy groups, housing agencies, and community action agencies] to ensure that each homeless child will experience a smooth and timely transfer from one school to another and receive all the services to which he/she is entitled.

Objective #1:

Working agreements will be established on a community-by-community basis between DOE, local education agencies, DPW, DSS, shelter providers, and other community service agencies which address the educational needs of homeless children.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

April 1989	•Gather and disseminate models of existing community networks which address the educational needs of homeless children in a comprehensive manner (e.g., Brockton, Worcester, Amesbury, Barnstable, Holyoke, Lynn).
Ongoing	•Recommend that each school district designate a homeless liaison. In cases where the duties of this liaison cannot be assumed by existing school personnel, the Massachusetts Department of Education will aid school districts in locating monies to fund such a position by disseminating information on viable sources of such funding (e.g., Horace Mann grants, McKinney 1990 money, private foundations, etc.)

H. Resolution of Disputes and Assurance of Compliance

8.0 In order to implement a comprehensive policy addressing the educational needs of homeless children, it is necessary to include systems of complaint management and compliance. The following policy delineates the steps to be taken in cases of non-compliance (by any involved party) and dispute resolution arising from policies set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education regarding the education of homeless children and youth.

8.0 **McKinney Regulations**

"Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State which will contain provisions designed to - (B)provide procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children." [PL 100-77, Sec 722 (e)(1)]

8.1 **Policy of the Massachusetts Department of Education**

We hope that school officials and parents of homeless children, through conferring with one another and keeping in mind that the goal of the education system is to provide an appropriate education in the least disruptive manner, will be able to settle among themselves disputes or complaints of non-compliance. However, we acknowledge that the resolution of some disputes may require intervention by a third party. To settle such disputes or complaints of non-compliance which may arise from the Massachusetts Department of Education's policies regarding the education of homeless children and youth the following complaint system will be used:

1)Disputes or complaints of non-compliance are filed with the homeless liaison in the regional education center in which the person filing the complaint lives. (See Appendix C for a list of these liaisons and the regions they cover.) Regional Center staff will investigate the dispute or complaint of non-compliance and meet with the involved parties to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

2)If the dispute or complaint of non-compliance cannot be settled at the regional level it will be referred to the appropriate staff within the central office of the Massachusetts Department of Education through the Coordinator of the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth for resolution.

3)If the dispute or complaint of non-compliance cannot be settled at this level it will be taken to the legal office of the Massachusetts Department of Education to ensure compliance with relevant state and federal laws.

If the dispute concerns the placement of a homeless child in school, the time needed to settle the dispute must not delay the child's entry into school. Until the dispute is settled the child will attend the school the parents or guardians have chosen. (See Section 1.3)

I. Dissemination of Information

9.0 As the Massachusetts Department of Education formulates policies and plans concerning the education of homeless children within the state, it is necessary to disseminate this information in a timely and consistent manner to all involved parties. The following section delineates various ways such information will be distributed.

9.1 McKinney Regulations

"The State will disseminate throughout the State information on program requirements and successful practices." [Assurance 3(d) from GEPA]

9.2 Goal, Objectives and Strategies

Goal:

to disseminate state-wide to all involved parties all pertinent information regarding the education of homeless children and youth

Objective #1:

A state-wide network for the dissemination of information relating to the education of homeless children will be established.

Activities/Timeline:

March 1989
- •Compile a mailing list of all agencies and persons involved with homeless children.
- •Review the following pieces of information to aid in the compilation of this list:
  - -CAP agencies in the state
  - -McKinney grant recipients (list from Executive Office of Community Development)
  - -Massachusetts Non-Profit Groups

Ongoing
- •Distribute pertinent information through the above channels with copies of these materials available in languages other than English as needed.

J. Annual Data Collection

10.0 In order to make wise administrative decisions regarding the education of homeless children it is necessary to keep an updated data base on the number, location and educational status of homeless school-age children. The following section delineates DOE's plan for the continuation of such data collection.

10.1 McKinney Regulations

"The Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth established in each State shall-

(1)annually gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the State, and such data gathering shall include the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and homeless youth in elementary and secondary schools and the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children;

10.2 Policy of the Massachusetts Department of Education

The Coordinator of the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth is responsible for the annual collection of data relating to the education of homeless children. Such state-wide data will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- number of homeless children of school-age (compulsory attendance age of 6-16) - broken down by grade level
- location of these children (i.e., public or private shelters, hotels/motels, living with friends or relatives)
- problems homeless children encounter in receiving all the educational services to which they are entitled
- number of homeless school-age children not attending school, if any
- reasons, if any, homeless children are not attending school
- unique educational needs of these children

K. Homeless Advisory Committee

11.0 The formation of the first draft of this state plan was the result of a concerted effort by a committee which included representatives from various state and community agencies involved with homeless children. Input from such constituents is invaluable to DOE and should be maintained as the plan is finalized, implemented and any future revisions are made. The following section addresses the role of the Homeless Advisory Committee within the Massachusetts Department of Education.

11.1 McKinney Regulations

"The State will consult with relevant advisory committees, local agencies, interest groups, and experienced professionals in the development of the State's plan." [Assurances, GEPA 6(a)]

11.2 Goals, Objectives and Stratcgies

Goal:

to provide an opportunity for shelter providers, school personnel, homeless persons, community service agencies, advisory groups and other interested parties to participate in the Massachusetts Department of Education's program planning relating to the education of homeless children.

Objective #1:

The Massachusetts Department of Education will form and Advisory Committee to the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth composed of homeless parents, representatives from other state agencies, community service organizations, school personnel, and other interested parties to advise the Department on the formation, implementation and revision of a state plan for the education of homeless children and future related activities.

Proposed Activities/Timeline:

November 1988 •Invite representatives of the following groups to serve on the advisory committee:
-shelter providers, advocacy groups, school personnel, community action agencies, homeless or previously homeless parents, state agencies

Ongoing •Strive to include a balanced representation of all involved parties by including representatives from various geographical locations, various ethnic groups, and of both sexes.

Appendix A

A. List of Homeless Advisory Committee Members

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Garland Kemper	Department of Public Welfare
Emanuel Manolopoulos	Greater Lowell Voc. Tech.
Diane Butler	Worcester Comm. Action Council
Ernie Campagnone	Attleboro Youth Shelter
Julie Conroy	Housing Assistance Corp.
Gail Fishe	Department of Social Services
Nancy Jackson & Angela Amel	Coalition of Adol. Emer. Services
Sr. John Julie Sullivan	Project HOPE Shelter
Leslie Lawrence	Mass. Coalition for the Homeless
Louise Moline	Mass. Assoc. of Elem. Scl. Principals
Alicia Ouellette	Valley Opportunity Council
Ed Olson & Eligijus Suziedelis	Brockton Public Schools
Sylvia Bynoe	Concerned Citizen
Jocelyn Villiotti & Lisa Orlick	Amesbury Community Action
Robert Bunnell	Norwell Public Schools

Appendix B
October 1988 Memo From Commissioner

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

M E M O R A N D U M

October 7, 1988

TO: Superintendents of Schools
School Committee Chairpersons
Other Interested Parties

FROM: Harold Raynolds, Jr.
Commissioner of Education

RE: Education of Homeless Students

One of the most troublesome issues in our society is homelessness, a traumatic experience which is compounded when it affects families with school-age children. Last year some school districts, including Lynn, Brockton and Peabody, assisted students from homeless families who were in temporary living situations and who transferred into or out of their schools. Although we know there are certain school districts in the Commonwealth where this is more prevalent than others, we believe it is important for all of us to be aware of and sensitive to the needs and rights of children whose families are homeless.

The federal government has enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, to aid the homeless. The basic premise of that portion of the Act that relates to the education of homeless children underscores the need for continuity of educational placement and services whenever possible. That law states that homeless children who are housed outside of their former school district are entitled to receive a free appropriate education in either (a) the school district in which they are receiving temporary housing, e.g., where the motel, hotel, or shelter is located, or (b) in their former school district for the remainder of the school year, depending on which of the two options is in the child's best interest. See 42 U.S.C. §11432 (e)(3). We believe that deference to parental choice meets that standard. Therefore, parents must be allowed to choose whether to continue to have their children attend school in the former school district or to enroll them in school in the new school district.

A major goal for all of us is to ensure that homeless children are encouraged and enabled to continue their education despite their homeless status. For many of these students whose lives are in crisis, school can be a

very stable factor. If a parent chooses to enroll children in school in the new school district, there may be difficulty in meeting the enrollment requirements of that school district. School registration can be a confusing experience for parents and this can be even more daunting to parents whose lives are disrupted by homelessness. Homeless families who are living in new communities often do not have the financial or transportation resources to go back to, or even telephone, their old schools to request immunization or academic records.

We strongly urge each of you to take steps to assist families in order to minimize the amount of time these children are out of school. Some things that could be done include providing release forms for parents to sign in the school office and mailing those forms to the former school or obtaining telephone verification of immunization records and allowing the children to enter school pending receipt of written documentation. Although the Student Records Regulations require that records be provided within two weekdays after the request, this does not always happen and the children should not be penalized for this lapse.

Some of you have already had extensive experience in providing educational services to homeless students. In Brockton and Fall River, for example, school officials have taken the initiative to develop liaisons between schools and homeless families. School staff have worked with shelter directors, Department of Social Services homeless workers, local Department of Public Welfare staff, human service providers and advocates for the homeless in their respective communities to ensure that homeless children continue to attend school. These efforts are laudable and can be used as models for other school systems. I hope that each of you will designate a person in your system to be the liasion for services to homeless students.

Questions regarding the education of homeless students can be directed to Michelle Fryt in Quincy at 770-7549. She has been appointed as the state-wide coordinator for homeless services. Staff in the Regional Education Centers whose names are attached can also assist you. Also enclosed is a list of the Department of Social Services workers in your area who have been designated as "homeless specialists" and who can provide you with information concerning the availability of services for homeless students and their families who are residing in motels or hotels. Another source of information is the local Department of Public Welfare office. However, neither of these agencies can release personally identifiable information about individuals without the individual's consent.

I know we all share the goal of providing appropriate education for children, regardless of their circumstances. I hope that we will be able to work together to ensure that education is a reality for children whose families are homeless.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Superintendents of Schools
School Committee Chairpersons
Other Interested Parties

FROM: Harold Raynolds, Jr.
Commissioner of Education

RE: Education of Homeless Children

DATE: January 25, 1989

* *

As we continue to attempt to meet the educational needs of homeless children, it is necessary to clarify our policies regarding various issues that have arisen and recommend ways school districts can meet the needs of this population.

Over the past few months we have been working with a Homeless Advisory Committee to draw up the first draft of a state plan which comprehensively addresses the educational needs of homeless school-age children. (A copy of this plan is enclosed.) Such a state plan is a requirement of the federal McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (PL 100-77). The first draft of this plan was presented to the Board of Education on January 24,1989; public hearings on the plan will be held on February 27,1989 in the Quincy office of the Massachusetts Department of Education (1385 Hancock Street) and on March 1,1989 in the Greater Springfield Regional Education Center in Chicopee (Macek Drive) from noon to 4:00 pm and will be resumed at 6:30pm until all who wish to speak have done so. (See enclosed flyer for further details of the public and written comment period.) A second draft will be presented to the Board in March and the final draft will be sent to the United States Department of Education (USDE) by the end of April 1989 as required.

This state plan will take effect after it has been approved by the Massachusetts Board of Education. In the meantime issues regarding educational services for homeless children are being raised and must be addressed. Following are existing policies pertinent to the education of homeless children.

In October 1988 we sent out a memo stating that parents of homeless children have the right to choose which school (of two) their children will attend: (a) the designated school within the district in which they are receiving temporary shelter or (b) the school in the former district (district of origin). Homeless children who move from one attendance zone to another within one district are also guaranteed this choice. Therefore, a homeless child is entitled to attend school in their school district or attendance

zone of origin for the remainder of the current school year or in the school district or attendance zone in which they are temporarily residing and such a choice will be made by the parents, guardians or the homeless youths themselves if they are living separate and apart from their parents and are managing their own financial affairs.

We all realize the difficulty homeless parents have in transporting their children to/from school in these situations. We encourage you to provide that transportation in order to help these children maintain continuity in their educational program. Districts which are transporting children to/from school within the district boundaries but across attendance zones can be reimbursed for such transportation under the regular schedule of reimbursement. (See enclosed Transportation Guide, "Additional Case Considerations".) At this time there are no available funds to reimburse school districts who transport homeless children to/from school across district lines. The Board of Education filed a bill (House Bill 99) with the state legislature in November 1988 which, if passed, would provide 100% reimbursement to cities and towns for this inter-district transportation of homeless students. This bill is now in the education committee.

In the meantime we urge school personnel to explore ways in which they can help all homeless children receive transportation to/from school. Some options include schools providing transportation to school and the parents providing transportation from school, and using the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) Emergency Assistance (EA) transportation funds to reimburse school districts who provide inter-district transportation for homeless children from EA-eligible families. (Holyoke has recently worked out such an agreement with DPW.)

In the December 1988 report by the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in Massachusetts it was noted that "Transfer of School Records" was named most often by school and shelter personnel alike as an obstacle to enrolling homeless children in school. (See enclosed report, p. 13.) Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 5 states, "Each person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides ". This means that any homeless child who registers at a school to which he/she is entitled to attend (as explained above) must be able to start school immediately upon registration (except if the child has not been properly immunized). In no case should the child be delayed entrance into that school because he/she is waiting for records to arrive from the previous school of attendance. Immunization records can be transferred over the telepone from the school nurse of the sending school to the school nurse of the receiving school. We realize that if homeless children have special needs and current IEPs, they will not be able to be placed into a comparable program until these records arrive from the sending school but must be placed in some educational program until these records arrive. Temporary placement in any school program for a homeless child is preferred to that child missing school while he/she sits in a motel or hotel room or accompanies his/her parents as they search for housing or a job. Homeless children who find permanent housing during the school year should be allowed to stay (until the end of the school year) in the school they were attending while homeless if the parents so choose.

We appreciate your sensitivity to the needs of these children and hope you will work with us to minimize any disruption in their educational program.

Appendix C

List of Regional Education Center Homeless Liaisons

Greater Boston Regional Center

Allen Gilpatrick
75 Acton Street
Arlington, MA 02174
(617) 641-4870

This region includes the following cities and towns:

Arlington	Concord	Melrose	Sudbury
Bedford	Dedham	Milton	Walpole
Belmont	Everett	Needham	Waltham
Boston	Hingham	Norwood	Wayland
Braintree	Holbrook	Quincy	Wellesley
Brookline	Hull	Randolph	Weston
Cambridge	Lexington	Revere	Westwood
Canton	Lincoln	Sharon	Weymouth
Chelsea	Malden	Somerville	Winthrop
Cohasset	Medford		

Northwest Regional Center

Ron Areglado
Berkshire Plaza
37 Main Street
North Adams, MA 02148
(413) 664-7101

This region includes the following cities and towns:

Adams	Florida	Monterey	Southampton
Alford	Gill	Monroe	Stockbridge
Ashfield	Goshen	Mount Washington	Southwick
Becket	Granville	New Ashford	Sunderland
Bernardston	Great Barrington	New Marlborough	Tolland
Blanford	Greenfield	North Adams	Tyringham
Buckland	Hancock	Northfield	Warwick
Charlemont	Hawley	Otis	Washington
Cheshire	Heath	Peru	Westhampton
Chesterfield	Hinsdale	Pittsfield	West Stockbridge
Clarksburg	Hutington	Plainfield	Whately
Colrain	Lanesborough	Richmond	Windsor
Conway	Lee	Rowe	Williamsburg
Cumington	Lenox	Russell	Williamstown
Dalton	Leyden	Sandisfield	Worthington
Deerfield	Middlefield	Savoy	
Egremont	Montague	Sheffield	
	Montgomery	Shelburne	

Southeast Regional Center

Shirley Hall
Human Services Building
33 Main Street - Suite 2
Lakeville, MA 02347
(508) 947-1231

This region includes the following cities and towns:

Abington	Eastham	Marshfield	Rehoboth
Acushnet	Easton	Mashpee	Rochester
Attleboro	Edgartown	Mattapoisett	Rockland
Avon	Fall River	Middleborough	Sandwich
Barnstable	Fairhaven	Nantucket	Scituate
Berkley	Falmouth	New Bedford	Seekonk
Bourne	Foxborough	Norfolk	Somerset
Brewster	Freetown	North Attleboro	Swansea
Bridgewater	Gay Head	Norton	Taunton
Brockton	Gosnold	Norwell	Tisbury
Carver	Halifax	Oak Bluffs	Truro
Chatham	Hanover	Orleans	Wareham
Chilmark	Hanson	Pembroke	Wellfleet
Dartmouth	Harwich	Plainville	West Bridgewater
Dennis	Kingston	Plymouth	Westport
Dighton	Lakeville	Plympton	West Tisbury
Duxbury	Mansfield	Provincetown	Whitman
East Bridgewater	Marion	Raynham	Wrentham

Central Massachusetts Regional Center

Lynne Simonds
Beaman Street, Route 140
West Boylston, MA 01583
(508) 835-6266

This region includes the following cities and towns:

Asburnham	Franklin	Millbury	Southborough
Ashland	Gardner	Millis	Spencer
Athol	Grafton	Millville	Sterling
Auburn	Hardwick	Natick	Stow
Barre	Harvard	New Braintree	Sturbridge
Bellingham	Holden	New Sale-	Sutton
Berlin	Holland	Northborough	Templeton
Blackstone	Holliston	Northbridge	Upton
Bolton	Hopedale	North Brookfield	Uxbridge
Boylston	Hopkinton	Oakham	Wales
Brimfield	Hubbardston	Orange	Warren
Brookfield	Hudson	Oxford	Webster
Charlton	Lancaster	Paxton	Wendell
Clinton	Leicester	Petersham	West Boylston
Douglas	Leominister	Phillipston	Westborough
Dover	Lunenberg	Princeton	West Brookfield
Dudley	Marlborough	Royalston	Westminster
East Brookfield	Medfield	Rutland	Winchendon
Erving	Medway	Sherborn	Worcester
Fitchburg	Mendon	Shrewsbury	
Framingham	Milford	Southbridge	

Greater Springfield Regional Center

Mary Birks
Macek Drive
Chicopee, MA 01013
(413) 594-8511

This region includes the following cities and towns:

Agawam	Hadley	Ludlow	South Hadley
Amherst	Hampden	Monson	Springfield
Belchertown	Hatfield	Northampton	Ware
Chicopee	Holyoke	Palmer	Westfield
Easthampton	Leverett	Pelham	West Springfield
East Longmeadow	Longmeadow	Shutesbury	
Granby			

Northeast Regional Center

Joseph McKeigue
790 Turnpike Street
North Andover, MA 01845
(508) 689-0164

This region includes the following cities and towns:

Acton	Georgetown	Merrimac	Saugus
Amesbury	Gloucester	Methuen	Shirley
Andover	Groton	Middleton	Stoneham
Ashby	Groveland	Nahant	Swampscot
Ayer	Hamilton	Newbury	Tewksbury
Beverly	Haverhill	Newburyport	Topsfield
Billerica	Ipswich	North Andover	Townsend
Boxborough	Lawrence	North Reading	Tyngsborough
Boxford	Littleton	Peabody	Wakefield
Burlington	Lowell	Pepperell	Wenham
Carlisle	Lynn	Reading	Westford
Chelmsford	Lynnfield	Rockport	West Newbury
Danvers	Manchester	Rowley	Wilmington
Dracut	Marblehead	Salem	Winchester
Dunstable	Maynard	Salisbury	Woburn
Essex			

ACTIVITIES TIMELINE FOR MARCH 1989 - AUGUST 1990

MARCH 1989	APRIL 1989	MAY 1989	JUNE 1989	JULY 1989	AUGUST 1989
•submit info for end-of-year school report •memo sent to schools regarding upcoming data collection •compile mailing list •provide info. on H. Bill 99 •disseminate DOE's transportation policy •hold interagency meeting to discuss educ. policies for adolescents in shelters	•investigate fund sources for homeless liaisons •disseminate info on existing inter agency collaboration	•consultant: perform needs assessment •trial runs of inservice workshop •sub-committee to develop in-shelter tutorial programs for adolescents (cont.) •development (by LEAs or DOE) of minimum set of standards for shelter (cont.)	•consultant: draft tutor volunteer network •inservice trainings for school personnel (through Oct.)		•consultant: (cont.) tutor programs
•design and set dates for inservice trainings for school personnel •examine existing in-shelter adolescent education programs •submit proposal to DOE for 1/2 time consultant to organize tutor network					

SEPTEMBER 1989	OCTOBER 1989	NOVEMBER 1989	DECEMBER 1989	JANUARY 1990	FEBRUARY 1990
(consultant cont.) implement volunteer tutor network (through May 1990) (cont.) develop adolescent in-shelter education standards (cont.) inservice trainings for school personnel					
	•prepare & send out one-day survey form •collate data from end-of-year report	•collate data from one-day survey	•report data to Washington, D.C.		

MARCH 1990	APRIL 1990	MAY 1990	JUNE 1990	JULY 1990	AUGUST 1990
(consultant cont.) implement volunteer tutor network			•evaluate tutor network		
•submit information for end-of-year school report; •memo to schools about about data collection	*On-going Activities: •coordinate meetings between local agencies and LEAs to discuss pertinent issues •work with DPW to access EA funds for transportation •distribute pertinent information				